

Tuesday, March 6, 2068; 1 a.m.; Thunderbird 5

Callie continued monitoring the transmissions between the fishing vessel and the WNS Excelsior when she finally heard the call she had waited for. "World Navy Ship Excelsior calling International Rescue. Do you copy, International Rescue? This is an emergency."

She yelled, "John, this is it!"

John rushed to the control console. "Are they calling us?"

"The Navy ship Excelsior is. You want to take this?"

"You take it for now. If it's too much, I'll jump in, okay?" He smiled at her encouragingly.

"F-A-B, John." Callie spoke into the microphone. "This is International Rescue, Excelsior. Go ahead."

The communications officer spoke gravely. "The fishing vessel Saucy Lady has accidentally caught a live mine in its net. There are seven other loose mines between us and the trawler. A bad storm in the area is pushing both the ship and the mines toward a gas-drilling platform. We are trying to deal with the mines, but we can't reach the trawler in time. Can you assist?"

Callie said, "Okay, Excelsior, we'll send help as quickly as possible."

"Thank you, International Rescue. Excelsior out." When the transmission stopped, the communications officer looked at Captain Stewart. "Help is on the way, sir."

"Good. I just hope the Thunderbirds can get to that ship before it's too late."

Back in Thunderbird Five, Callie noticed that John had been scribbling down notes as she was talking with the Excelsior. He motioned her away from the microphone. "I'll take it from here, Callie. First, I'm going to let Virgil know we got the call. That way he can put things in motion." John moved over to the mike with an easy, confident stride. "Then I'll hail the trawler and find out some more details."

He glanced at her. "Listen, Callie. Listen and learn." He flicked a switch. "Thunderbird Five to base. Come in, base."

\*\*\*\*\*Same date, 10 minutes later; Tracy Villa Lounge\*\*\*\*\*

Virgil saw John's portrait eyes flash. Pressing a button to activate the radio, he said, "Come in, Thunderbird 5."

"Vee, we just got a call from the WNS Excelsior. They were sent out to help that trawler that got

tangled up with the mine. Seems that a number of mines came up with that one and Excelsior can't reach the trawler, which is headed for one of the gas rigs out there."

"Okay, Jay. Can you get us more details?" Virgil asked, pressing the button to send out the emergency signal.

"Just about to do that, base. Thunderbird Five out."

John turned to Callie momentarily as he began looking for a frequency to reach the Saucy Lady. "Did you notice that I used 'Vee' when I was speaking to him? No names. Right now we're using first initials as code name. You would be Cee, which may be a problem."

"Because of Christopher," she realized. "Hmm... What if I used my middle name, Louise?"

"Call you EI? or Cee EI? Oh, my. That's rather funny. Seal. I can see we're going to have to come up with a different system. I'll bring it up to Scott when this rescue is over." He turned back to the microphone. "International Rescue calling Saucy Lady. Come in, Saucy Lady, over."

\*\*\*\*\*Monday, March 5, 2068; 1:15 p.m.; aboard the Saucy Lady\*\*\*\*\*

The crew of the Saucy Lady were all below as the trawler itself weathered the storm.

The young man at the radio heard a message he didn't expect. "I can't believe it!"

"What is it?" asked the captain.

"It's International Rescue! They're asking us to respond!"

"I'll take the call." He took the speaker and said, "International Rescue, this is Captain James Bowers of the Saucy Lady. How did you know we needed help?"

"Greetings, Captain Bowers. The Excelsior radioed us with your situation and asked us to assist. What is your current status?" John said crisply.

"The mine we picked up in our nets is now bobbing off our stern. Its chain got wrapped around our propeller and stopped us dead in the water," Bowers told him. "Not that we're not moving. This storm is pushing us along. The swells are very high and I have all my men below decks."

"Are there any injuries?"

"Nothing major so far. Mostly frostbite and some hypothermia."

"What's your ship's complement?"

"Our complement stands at 12." Bowers was heartened by the professional-sounding voice coming out of the speakers.

"Has any attempt been made to cut the mine free?"

"Yes, we tried. But between the storm and the thickness of the chain, we were unable to cut it loose. I wasn't going to risk losing a man overboard in this gale."

John nodded, unseen by Bowers. "Good thinking, Captain. Give me your current position. We will launch within the next fifteen minutes."

"Can you give us a ETA? We're getting close to the gas rigs."

John consulted a computer screen. "Our first craft should be there within the hour. Our main rescue craft, however, takes a little longer. Hang in there, Captain. There's hope yet."

Bowers sighed with relief. "Thank you. International Rescue. We'll be looking for you."

"We'll be there, Captain. International Rescue out."

\*\*\*\*\*Tuesday, March 6, 1:25 a.m.; Thunderbird 5\*\*\*\*\*

Callie asked, "John, do you think we can help them in time?"

John took in a deep breath and expelled it through his nose. "As long as they stay below, they should be safe enough from the storm. It's the rigs that worry me." He looked Callie in the eye. "It will be a near thing, I'll tell you that." He turned back to the microphone. "Now to update brother Virgil on the particulars."

Callie turned away and whispered, "I hope they can be saved in time." She looked at John and said, "Is there anything I can do at this point?"

"Not really, just continue to listen and learn. We'll keep monitoring the frequency and I may have to put out a hail to the closest gas rigs as well. Let them know what's going on," John told her. "We may need one as a staging platform." He tuned in the frequency that put him in touch with base while Callie stood in the background listening and learning about this most important of jobs within International Rescue.

Post by Tikatu and TracyFan4Ever on 07/08/2004